



Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

As of December 21, 2004 the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 authorized the United States Department of Agriculture to provide grants to individual State departments of agriculture in order to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. This allows State departments to review eligible specialty crop enhancing projects that include but are not limited to: research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, increased consumption, increased innovation, promote local producers, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, development of sustainable farming systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives. These projects will address issues affecting the specialty crop industry in order to increase the competitiveness of high-valued crops (fruits, vegetables, nuts and herbs) throughout the nation and individual states.

Throughout fiscal years 2008-2012 each state is awarded funding based on available funds for the fiscal year, and on the value of specialty crop production in each state. This will be determined through the national value of specialty crop production using the latest available cash receipt data. During the first fiscal year, 2006, of the SCBGP \$104,134 was awarded to the state of Nevada. For the most recent funding released in 2010, \$230,612 was awarded to State of Nevada projects. This demonstrates a strong increase in specialty crop production and awareness in the State of Nevada.

This program has greatly influenced an increase in specialty crop production throughout the State of Nevada since the grant's start in 2006. Many individuals have increased production and education through hoop houses, school garden programs, and specialty crop workshops. Projects have greatly influenced youth's, new farmers, and transitioning farmer's knowledge pertaining to the production of high valued crops. The high-percentage of wasted crops has been reduced through value-added processing, and an increase in consumer demand. Research has been conducted through experimental growth regarding what types of specialty crops are sustainable in Nevada's climate. The NDOA is eager to seek out further projects that will enhance the competitiveness of high-valued crops. For further information and upcoming deadlines regarding the grant program contact the Nevada Department of Agriculture at 775-353-3675.

Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute is a specialty crop sub-grant recipient that has organized many workshops based on various specialty crops, production techniques, hoop houses, advertising/promotion, food health/safety, and research. Workshops have encouraged new growers, promoted the SCBGP, and increased the success of specialty crop growers/participants. For further information regarding up-coming workshops or the Specialty Crop Institute visit <http://www.wnc.edu/ce/sci/>.

A detailed list of eligible and ineligible crops and projects are listed but not limited to the SCBGP's website, www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp, along with additional information pertaining to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This information is to familiarize interested applicants with the program and to prepare them for the upcoming application that will be made available this spring. If interested in being

added to the NDOA's contact list regarding upcoming information please email Ashley Jeppson at ajeppson@agri.state.nv.us.